

TALKS WITH AMERICAN STUDENTS, Chapter 2

2nd Talk at the University of Puerto Rico, San Juan

12th September, 1968

Krishnamurti: We were saying the other day that our whole relationship with other human beings must undergo a radical change. All over the world, frightening violence is spreading. Wars, racial riots and conflict exist outside of our skin and inside it. Our life is a battlefield, a constant struggle, from the moment we are born till we die, and we hope somewhere in this battlefield to find some kind of peace, some place where we can take refuge. That is more or less what man is seeking all the time, a certain refuge outwardly, in society, and some security inwardly. This is one of the major causes of conflict, this demand on the part of every human being right throughout the world to find some kind of resting place, some kind of relationship in which there is no longer any conflict, some kind of ideology that would be assuring and lasting. So man begins to invent an ideology of religion, of organized belief, of dogma, which will give him deep, satisfying hope. But as one can see throughout the world, organized religion, like nationality, divides people. There have been untold wars in the name of God, in the name of religion, in the name of peace, in the name of freedom. And I think one must realize that every form of relationship must inevitably lead to chaos and conflict, if it is based on conceptual thinking. We went into that the last time that we met here. Man has tried to find some kind of reality that will be completely true - not be an invention of the mind - something that will give significance to life, a meaning to the drab existence of everyday life. I think that is what most people, both intellectual and so-called religious people are always trying to find a meaning to life. Because our life as it is now is pretty drab and meaningless, with little pleasures, little satisfactions, sexual and otherwise. But man demands much more, something truer, deeper, with more meaning.

So he begins to invent or give a significance to life, intellectually or conceptually; this again fails, as it is merely an invention, a theory, a possibility. It is no good trying to find something that is really true, not an invention, nor a concept but an actuality, a reality that can never be destroyed by thought. To come upon that one must establish right relationship in this world, right human relationship, a right society, a structure of society, culture, that gives man opportunity to live here fully, that will make life agreeable, happy, a life in which there is no conflict, a life that is truly moral. And it is only then when the foundation is laid rightly, that here is a possibility of finding out for oneself what is truth.

Our concern must be to live completely and totally in his world, to live so that our relationship with our neighbours - whether a thousand miles away or next door - does not breed conflict. There will have to be a society which is not competitive, brutal, aggressive, destructive, a society which does not breed wars. Society is the outcome of our daily life - whatever we are in our daily life, the way we act, the things to which we give value, how we behave, our daily conduct - all this breeds a society in which there must be war, hate, antagonism. So we have to find out for ourselves (not according to any moralist) how to live so completely, totally, and at the same time morally, to live so freely as human beings, completely at peace within ourselves, that a society comes about in which all the clashes of racial and economic differences disappear and there can be equal opportunity for every human being. That will only be possible if each one of us human beings feels the complete necessity of living so that his life is an expression of peace and freedom.

That is the real question, whether we can, living in this society, change it - not through violent means, because that has never produced a society based on freedom and peace - make it into a society which gives man freedom, so that he is a light to himself.

So our question is, society as it exists must be changed. That is obvious. The Communists have not been able to do it, though they have murdered thousands, millions of people. The capitalists also have not been able to do it. So one must find a different way of living - not a system, socialistic or any other kind of system - but a different way of living. And that can come about only as we said the other day, when we understand ourselves, not merely as individuals but in relationship with society. Because we are society, we are the world, it is not something different from us. The culture which conditions you, the society which binds you, shapes you, is your struggle, your way of life. So our question is whether it is possible to change our everyday life so radically, so fundamentally that our whole thinking process is different? We are by nature, through inheritance, instinct, violent people. We are very self-centred - me first and everything else second - my security, my position, my prestige is much more important

than anybody else's, and this breeds the competitive spirit, which has produced society, with all its racial and economic divisions. So unless there is a deep change in the psyche itself, mere outward reformation through bloodshed and legislation, will not bring about ultimately a way of life in which man is at peace within himself. In which he can live virtuously, a life in which he can seek and find reality.

After all, we are all seeking happiness. But happiness is a by-product, is a result, not an end in itself. Our problem is, how is it possible to change man? Is it through an analytical process, going into the question of the cause of his behaviour, of his violence, of his aggression, analysing it very, very carefully to find out the causes, and then through gradual time, through gradual process, during many years, to bring about a change? Is that the way? Do you understand the question? That is, will each one of us as human beings change totally our ways of life through the understanding of the causes of our behaviour, both publicly and privately, secretly and openly, to find out the causes of why we are aggressive, why we are competitive, why we are violent? If we analyse very carefully, step by step, so that no mistakes are made, will that bring about a change? That analytical process implies time, doesn't it? It will take many days, perhaps many years to analyse very, very carefully. And perhaps through willing it, then we might change. But I doubt it. Man has never changed, though he knows the cause of violence, though he has experienced thousands of wars, he has not stopped killing. He kills animals for his food and he kills people for ideologies.

If we take time it will take many years to change - please go into this with me, do not merely listen to what I say as to a series of ideas - we are not concerned with ideas, we are concerned with daily living and bringing about a radical change in that living. And so, do not please merely agree or disagree, refuting or accepting. As we said the other day, one has to listen very attentively, not to the speaker but using the speaker as a mirror in which one sees oneself, so that one becomes aware of oneself. So our question is, will the analytical process free the mind? This implies time; chronologically it may take many days, many years. It will do so if you go into it analytically. And, as it takes many years you will be helping to bring about chaos in the world, more wars, more aggression. So, that is not the way. The analytical process, based on the discovery of the causes of human behaviour implies time and we have no time, when the house is burning, when there is such brutal existence, when there is so much hate; when the house is on fire, you have no time, you have to change immediately; that is the real question. The intellectual process, which is the analytical process, is not the way. And the religious people say, right throughout the world in their own phraseology, you must wait for the grace of God, which again is absurd. Then there must be a totally different way, for man, realizing the condition of the world, observing what is actually going on, not theoretically nor intellectually, but seeing the violence, the brutality, the hatred, the wars, the killing, for which he is responsible. Look at the war that is going on in Vietnam; each one of us is responsible for it. Each one of us is also responsible for the riots and the racial prejudices. You live in this happy island with the lovely green hills and the blue sea, seemingly isolated, but you are not so, you are part of the world, part of this terrible misery that is going on. And when you see that, you also see that to go into the analytical process using the intellectual way of examining, does not answer the problem at all. Neither the religious outlook, nor the bloody revolution, bringing about anarchy in the world, solves this question.

So, there must be a different way of bringing about an immediate change in the mind. Perhaps you will say that it is not possible. You will say, 'I, who am so conditioned by society, conditioned by the culture in which I live, am so heavily bound that it is not possible for me to change instantly'. To give up smoking, for example, is something you find very difficult. And to give up, to put aside complex ideological conditioning is immensely more difficult. So you say it is not possible to free the mind instantly and be free of every kind of antagonism, brutality, violence. I think it is possible, not as an idea, not as an Utopian theory, but actually. Is it possible for the human mind, conditioned for millions of years, to change, radically, instantly? Now I will show what I mean. We will discuss it. First of all, all thought, all thinking, is the result of the past, as all knowledge is of the past. All thinking is the response of memory and memory always belongs to yesterday. You can observe this for yourselves, it is not some mystical nonsense, it is a scientific fact which you can observe for yourself when you ask a question. Your mind looks into what you already know, into the memory, and then according to that memory it responds. I am putting it very quickly and briefly, because it is a very complex problem. Thought is always conditioned, and thought is always old. And here is a new problem, totally new, a new challenge which says, you must change immediately, otherwise you are going to destroy yourself. And to that challenge, naturally, the reaction is that of the old. If you respond to it according to the old

systems of thought, then you are not acting adequately to that challenge. I hope this is clear. And so, to this new challenge which demands that you change instantly - because the alternative is that you are going to destroy yourself, because you know that there are more wars coming, more brutality, more suppressions, that the extreme Left is becoming rampant and the extreme Right is getting stronger, and that this will lead to more bloodshed, more wars, more hatred - seeing all that objectively you come to the inevitable conclusion that the human mind must change integrally, totally, immediately. And thought cannot do this because thought is the response of the past. And when you respond to something new according to the old, there is no communication between the new challenge and yourself. I do not know if this is clear.

The new challenge to human beings who have lived for so long in such misery which is now increased by dreadful destructive instruments, the challenge is that you must change instantly. And if your response is not new, you will be in greater conflict, you will be contributing to greater sorrows for men. So you must respond to the new challenge in a new way. And that is only possible when you understand the whole structure and nature of thought. If you respond intellectually, verbally, conceptually, then it is the operation and the approach of the old. So, is it possible - please listen to this, however absurd it may sound, please listen to it first - is it possible to respond without thought, respond with your whole being and not part of your being? Thought or the intellect is a fragment of your whole being, obviously, and when a partial, a fragmentary part answers to an immense challenge, it creates more conflict. So thought, the intellect, as it is a fragment of the total human being will not produce a radical change, it is not the means of approaching this challenge. It is only when the totality of the human mind - mind being the nervous responses, the emotions, the everything that is you - completely responds, without any fragmentation in that response, that there is a new action taking place. If I respond to this challenge intellectually, verbally, it will only be a fragmentary response, it will not be a total, human response. And the total human response is only possible when I give my mind and heart to it completely. That is, the response to the new challenge to be adequate, to be complete, is one unique response, which is not intellectual, nor verbal, nor theoretical; and that response is (if I may use that word which has been so spoiled) love.

You know, that word has been so spoiled by us, spoiled by the priests, by the politicians, by the husband and the wife, spoiled in such a way that when we say that we love God - we do not. We speak of love of country, love of the ideal, and that word has become ugly. If we can strip that word of all the ugliness, then we can see what that word means. Because when you love you love totally, completely with all your being. And love is not pleasure. For most of us, for most human beings, love implies pleasure, sexual or otherwise. And we have spoiled that word by characterising it as divine and not divine. But love is something that must be grasped, understood, lived and felt, with no fragmentation into intellect, emotion, physical love and so on. It is a total response. And it is only that response that brings about a radical revolution in the mind. I think for the time being that is enough from me, so will you ask questions? Shall we talk about it? But, before you ask questions, may I ask you to make them brief, and to the point, because I have to repeat your questions. And if I repeat your question wrongly, please tell me. If you speak Italian, French, Spanish or English of course, I may be able to understand. So please make it brief and to the point and referring to what we are talking about, not some theoretical question, but how to bring about a fundamental change in man. Sir?

Questioner: How can you communicate this feeling or this word love, this meaning behind the word love to others?

Krishnamurti: How can you communicate with the world, with the rest of the group? Is that the question, Sir? Do not bother to communicate with others. Have this thing. You know, we are so eager to communicate our findings to others, we want to convince others, we want to tell them; this is not a question of propaganda, this is not a thing that you can just propagate by word, you can only tell it to others by your life, the way you live every day. If a hundred people in this room really understood it, lived it - good God! Sir, a flower which is full of nectar, full of beauty and colour is not bothered about propagating itself, isn't concerned with anything - it is what it is. And if you are sensitive and alive and capable of looking at that flower, that is enough. So what matters is not the other, the person that is not here, what matters is the person that is here.

Questioner: What makes love true for human beings?

Krishnamurti: It is fairly simple, isn't it? If you are jealous, this is obviously not love. If there is fear there is obviously no love. If you are dominating somebody else, it is not love. If you talk about love and go to the office and cause harm to others, it is not love. So when you know what is not love and put it aside, not theoretically but actually in your life, and when there is neither hate nor fear, then the other is.

Questioner: Should we not love ourselves first?

Krishnamurti: I am afraid we do. (laughter) And that is the bane of it. Our love for ourselves is so great, we are so self-centred, we love our country, our God, our beliefs, our dogmas, our possessions, and these are ourselves. Look at the mess this has brought about in the world. I do not think we see the gravity or the seriousness of what is going on in the world and we do not seem to be aware of our own lives. We live them in a routine way, in boredom and the fear of loneliness and of not being loved. And so our actions produce hatred and antagonism. We are not aware of all this. And religions with their organized beliefs have merely helped us to escape from our daily life, preventing us from looking. Love is something that you cannot talk about. You know what it is not. And when you go into it and put aside in yourself what it is not, then it is.

Questioner: There is fear of slander... the Zen Buddhists say that you must die every day and that then perhaps you may find reality.

Krishnamurti: I wonder why you bother to repeat what other people say. What Zen Buddhists say or what the Hindus say or what the Christian Bible says or what the specialists say; must you have this authority? Do think about it, please. We are secondhand people, we repeat what others say, what Zen, what the Vedanta, what Yoga teaches and so on. We are never a light to ourselves. We are such mediocre people. So, the questioner says, by dying each day one comes upon reality. Do you know what that means? Do you know what it means to die to anything, to die to some pleasure that you cherish? Have you ever tried? You know, one has to go very deeply into this question and it is quite complex. A mind that is continuous, that repeats, that is caught in habits, that functions as a conditioned mind, anything that has continuity, cannot see anything new. It is only when there is an ending, a total ending that something new can be perceived. And to cling our pleasure, to a particular form of memory, is almost impossible for most human beings.

You know, this question brings in a much larger one which is the question of death. I do not know if this is the time or this is the occasion to talk about it. Because we have very few minutes left. But perhaps when we meet here again we might go into it. And to understand what death is one must understand what living is. We don't understand what living is; for us living is a battlefield, conflict, brutality, sometimes at rare intervals a flash of joy and happiness. That is what we call living. If we do not understand what living is how can we understand what dying is. We are frightened of living and we are frightened of dying. And Zen, that is, a certain form of meditation says that you must die every day. Of course one must die every day and there is beauty in that, because everything then is new. That means dying to all experience. Again we have not time to go into that now and I hope you will not mind this. Perhaps next time we meet we shall go into it.

Questioner: Is God participating in our lives and if that isn't so what can we do about it?

Krishnamurti: Now this is again one of the most complex questions. Like every human question it is very complex. You know, you do believe in God. Somebody says, 'I am God'. There are two things here aren't there; why do you believe in God and if you say, 'I am God', do you mean it, or, is it just an idea? just look at it. Find out what the truth of it is, not what you believe and what I believe. Belief has no reality in the face of what is true. To find out what God (or whatever is there) truly is, there must be no fear, there must be no sense of possession, acquisitiveness, envy - do you follow? - there must be complete virtue. A flowering of goodness, that is the foundation, not what you believe or what your religion is, what your conditioning or what propaganda tells you that there is or there is not. If you intend to say, 'I am God', don't say it, because you do not know what you are saying. That is one of the sayings of the Hindus in India, that they are God, only covered up by matter, by manifestation of this world and this is too complex. To find out if there is reality, don't assert anything, don't assert anything, don't belong to any group, to any belief. One must be free to find out, like a scientist is, a really good scientist, not one who is merely using his capacity to further mischief, but the true

scientist. The true scientist is free to examine, without any bias, without any conditioning, to look. If we approach things in this way and, if we are lucky, we may find out what reality is. No conceptual assertion that there is or that there is not comes into it. That requires great love and beauty; it demands humility. And when we say that there is God, or that there is no God, this is utter lack of humility.

Questioner: Are fear and evasion the same thing?

Krishnamurti: He is saying, 'You have an image of fear and an image of the psyche, of the 'me'; there is the image of myself and the image I have about fear'. Now, are the two things different? You understand the question? There is the image of myself - 'I must be good, or I am not good, I am ashamed, I am frightened' and all that, and I create another image in which there are the various attributes of myself. Look, let us put it very simply. You have an image about your wife or your husband, don't you? You must, obviously. Is the image that you have about your wife or your husband, different from yourself? Please follow this. The image you have about yourself has been put together through experience and the image you have about your wife or your husband has been put together in the same way. So experience is the image maker. Are you following? Am I making myself fairly clear? Now, experience is the factor that makes my images about myself and about my wife, and my wife does the same about me. This image-making is brought about through experience. But to be related to a human being implies being in relationship with another human being without an image, and the absence of image means the absence of experience. Experience has built, put together the image about myself and experience has put together the image about my wife and hers about me. To be actually in relationship with human beings is to have no image. This is not a theory - see it as you see this microphone, objectively, factually. This means that whatever my wife says to me in anger or in pleasure or in affection, must leave no residue, it must leave no mark, otherwise it becomes an experience. I wonder if you are catching this. If she says to me something pleasant, I like it. That is an experience which I cherish, and I hold on to it. And that creates an image about my wife. And that creates also an image of me. Now, if my wife tells me something ugly, that also creates an image. The question then is: is it possible, when she tells me something pleasant, to look at it so completely, so fully that it leaves no experience at all? Are you following all this? To live that way demands great attention, and awareness, whether she insults or flatters, nags or dominates me, or whether I dominate her. In this way my relationship is always fresh, is always new; otherwise it is not real relationship, it is only a relationship between two images, and this has no validity at all. The images in that case are symbols and having a relationship between two symbols is meaningless. But that is how we live, in a meaningless relationship - I am sorry to expose it so brutally - in which there is no love. Love is something always fresh, new, young, innocent.

Questioner: When a person establishes a goal for himself and pursues that, how can he not be conditioned?

Krishnamurti: I do not know why you want goals. A goal implies distance, something in the future. You have established that goal as a purpose and you are conforming all your life, battling with yourself to conform to that pattern. That is what you mean by a goal, don't you? An end, a purpose, a goal is something in the distance which you have established for yourself; it may be an image, it may be an idea, it may be an ideology, a noble one at that. But, first of all, why do you want goals at all? You see, you can't answer that. Wait, I must finish this question, Sir.

Questioner: Do we need goals?

Krishnamurti: Yes, Sir, that's right. We need goals because we are conditioned, we have to aim at something. Why do you do that? I know we are conditioned, but why? Can't you go into it a little bit more deeply?

Questioner: Because we are not perfect we make perfection the goal.

Krishnamurti: Look at it, please do look at it! You have the image of perfection which means that you are imperfect, now why do you want an image at all? You are imperfect aren't you and you want to change this. Why do you want a goal? 'I am imperfect'. What does that mean? I am angry, I am brutal, I am envious, I am frightened. Why do I want a goal, a goal, a perfection? Here is a fact. I am frightened; why can't I save myself from fear? But we want an ideal. Perfection is merely an escape from the imperfect. The imperfect is also an image, as is the perfection. You don't see all this. So to

live implies to live with `what is' and bring about a radical change in what is. And that is not possible if you have a principle, a goal, an image of perfection. That is romanticism, that is not spiritual at all. What is spiritual is to see the fact as it is and change it. If I am violent I become aware of it, know the nature of it, the structure of it, the `why'. And the very seeing of it, instantly is the ending of it.

Questioner: Could change be a goal in itself?

Krishnamurti: No Sir look - when you have a toothache you want to end it don't you? You don't have the idea or the image of perfect health, of having no pain at all; you have pain. That is the major factor, not the goal.

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